

OBITUARY NOTICE
OF
DR. SAMUEL MOORE.

READ BY FRANKLIN PEALE,

Before the American Philosophical Society, March 15, 1861.

It has been justly said of notices of deceased members, and generally of obituary communications, that they were invariably eulogies, rather than candid statements of the lives and characters of those who have departed from among us. There will be no apology in the present instance for not departing from usage; the most exact, minute, and candid statement can take no other form than that of an eulogium. He whose life and character we are to record was so eminent in all that constitutes the perfect man, that no deviation from the direct path, in the course of a Christian gentleman, or failure in the highest duties, can be found to cast a shadow on his path, throughout a long life of earnest industry and ardent zeal in all the multifarious situations and occupations of his career.

Dr. Samuel Moore had a varied life in the occupations to which he applied himself, as well as in the conditions of his health and fortunes.

For the last quarter of a century his business energy and services were devoted to the Hazleton Coal Company, of which he was the originator and most active officer, presiding over its affairs from the commencement until within a few hours of the close of his life.

The appreciation of his services and character in this relation is fully exemplified by the proceedings which took place at the annual meeting of stockholders, soon after his decease, and published by their order, a copy of which is presented to the Society.

As a Director of the Mint of the United States his career was distinguished by foresight and enterprise, unequalled in the previous history of that institution; he was appointed to the office in 1824, by President Monroe, and continued through the terms of Presidents Adams and Jackson, resigning his commission in 1835.

The edifice now occupied as the Mint was erected under his directorship and through his agency in procuring the necessary acts and appropriations by Congress. His foresight and enterprise are strikingly illustrated, by his knowledge of the advance in science applied to the arts, and his efforts to place the institution over which he presided, at the head of all similar establishments.

With this view the writer of this notice was charged with a special mission to Europe, under instructions from Dr. Moore, which embraced every department of mint operations, but especially referred to the important discoveries emanating from the researches of Gay-Lussac and other distinguished chemists; particularly the assay of silver by the humid process, which gave to that art, perfect precision and exactitude in place of the allowances and liabilities to which it had been previously so subject, and the consequences of which were so embarrassing.

The parting process by sulphuric acid, then new, was also prominently embraced in those instructions; but it is impossible, in the limits to which this brief memoir is confined, to notice a tithe of the objects, chemical, mechanical and financial, included in the instructions referred to; they showed that the mind of the author embraced a wide field of observation, and that he was alive to all progress in every department of science.

He relinquished his honorable office by resignation, to the regret of the department, doubtless in consequence of the inadequate compensation for such services and the attractive prospects which his foresight evidently anticipated from the development of the coal interests of his native State, which he lived to realize, after many vicissitudes, in their fullest extent.

Dr. Moore served his country in Congress, under the dictates of sound patriotic principles, through three terms, beginning in 1818; it is known to his family and some of his intimate friends, that one of the great measures of the day (for there were dark days then as now, threatening the greatest of evils to our country), was devised and written out by him, and ultimately enacted into law, thus saving, for the time being, this distracted country from troubles that have since assumed so formidable an aspect. Other patriots have now the honor of these memories; he with his characteristic "delicacy" did not claim them during life, and we shall not publish what he did not choose to make known as his own; any other course might not have his sanction if he was still with us in life.

Dr. Moore was an early graduate (in the year 1791) of the Uni-

versity of Pennsylvania. He was also a tutor in that institution, and subsequently commenced the practice of medicine, having prepared himself by a thorough course of study within its walls.

His home at this time was in Bucks County, Pennsylvania; but owing to ill health he was induced to undertake a voyage to Canton; he continued this course of life for several years, making four voyages to Canton and one to Calcutta, and it was not until the year 1808 that he sought the repose of country life, but not in idleness, for he was always active in the pursuits of business and benevolence.

It is evident from the above facts that Dr. Moore was an extensive traveller, not alone during his occupations by sea and in foreign lands, but also in his own country; as a pedestrian he was rarely equalled, and he continued this habit throughout his long life. His observations during these opportunities were always acute and profound, and his memory retentive, so that his conversation thus enriched was always interesting, instructive and pleasing.

This retrospective view of the life of Dr. Moore now reaches his birth, which occurred at Deerfield, Cumberland County, New Jersey, on the 8th of February, 1774.

His father, Mr. David Moore, was a patriot and soldier of the revolutionary era, and shared in the perils of the darkest hours of the war; he was wounded at the battle of Brandywine; an indelible impression upon the mind of the son was effected by the scenes of those days, particularly that of his suffering parent's condition when brought home wounded from that hard-fought field; to their influence may be attributed the earnest patriotism which ever distinguished him from his youth, to the last hours of his venerable age.

These brief notices of the periods in the life of Dr. Moore are so indicative of his character that it is not essential to add a summary, but the matter which has been placed at our disposal contains so much that is just and true, in regard to him and his domestic relations, that the following quotations cannot be omitted, and the whole is gratefully acknowledged:

“His Christian character, without being obtrusive, was earnest, decided and consistent, and leaves a grateful remembrance to his friends. Whatever he considered worth doing he did with all his might; in one instance the writer has known him to take a number of long walks to execute a single object of benevolence after he was eighty-six years of age.

“The great features of his life were, an intense energy and activity, coupled with kindness and generosity.”

“The churches of Doylestown and Hazleton, and the Scots Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia have reason to remember his efforts in their erection or sustentation.”

“Many persons will recall the lasting benefits they have individually received at his hands.”

It can be hardly out of place to add that his home was made happy by a wife who was worthy of him, and who survived him only five days. She was a daughter of Professor Robert Patterson—at an early period one of the Secretaries and subsequently President of this Society—and sister of the late Dr. R. M. Patterson, who also occupied the same honorable posts. She had a mind of uncommon strength and well cultivated, and a heart full of active benevolence. She was one of the originators of the Union Benevolent Society of this city, by whose extensive operations, carried on through many years, great good has been effected among the indigent of Philadelphia.

“Her personal deportment combined politeness with kindness; her conversation was fluent, dignified, and very attractive. Her piety was more than unaffected, it was of lofty proportions; indeed she belonged to that class of women of whose writings she was so fond,—Hannah More, Charlotte Elizabeth Touna, and the authoresses of ‘English Hearts and Hands,’ and ‘Haste to the Rescue.’”

She died on the 24th of February, nearly eighty-four years of age, five days after the decease of her husband; and thus terminated this remarkable union of about sixty years, ten years beyond the era so rarely reached, and generally known as the golden wedding; they did not celebrate it, but there is a melancholy pleasure in adding the fact to our record of their lives.

“Dr. Moore’s life afforded a notable example of recuperative physical power. Three times, at least, he was so ill as to be almost past recovery: at the age of twenty-five, with an apparent consumption; at sixty-one, with a continued fever; and at seventy-five with inflammatory rheumatism. He was by no means robust at any period, yet his powers of endurance must have been very great. He habitually labored, with pen and ink, day and night, and was an indefatigable reader; yet he retained his powers of mind and body, the use of sight, hearing, and speech to the last.”

He was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society in 1805, at the early age of thirty-one, and died the oldest resident member, on the eighteenth day of February, 1861, in the eighty-eighth year of his age.